
Walking meditation

A practice that uses movement rather than stillness. It was made for a mind and body that won't settle: restlessness is treated as an ordinary part of it, not a sign you're doing it wrong.

Where

A stretch of path twenty or thirty paces long: a hallway, a garden path, a quiet bit of beach or park. Walk to one end, turn around, and walk back. That's the whole structure.

How

- 1 Stand still for a moment.** Feel your weight in your feet.
- 2 Walk a little more slowly than usual,** but not so slowly that it feels strange.
- 3 Put your attention in the soles of your feet:** the pressure of the ground, the shift of weight, the moment of lifting and the moment of placing.
- 4 Keep your eyes open,** resting on the path a few steps ahead.
- 5 At the end of the path,** stop, turn slowly, pause, and walk back.
- 6 Your mind will wander, constantly.** Each time you notice, bring your attention back to your feet. That noticing and returning is the practice, however many times it happens.

Ten minutes is a good start.

Ways to vary it

- Faster on restless days, slower as you settle. Speed isn't the point.
- Quiet words with your steps: "lifting, moving, placing", or "here, now".
- A phrase as you walk, such as "may this body be at ease": not as a demand, just a kindness offered to something having a hard time.
- If attention on the feet stirs things up, widen it. Walk at an easy pace and take in the sights and sounds around you. That's still practice.

Where it comes from

In Buddhist practice, walking is one of the four postures (*iriyāpatha*), with standing, sitting and lying down. Each is a place to practise: when walking, know that you are walking.